

POEMS TO THE SEA

and

PAINTERLY POETICS:

CHARLES OLSON, ROBERT CREELEY, COLE SWENSEN

by

PETER GILLIES

A thesis submitted to Plymouth University
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Humanities & Performing Arts
Faculty of Arts & Humanities

July 2016

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.

Acknowledgements

The genesis of this research lies in a visit to the exhibition *Starting at Zero: Black Mountain College 1933-57* at the Arnolfini, Bristol in November 2005. The show included some poems, on pages taken from the *Black Mountain Review*, by Charles Olson and Robert Creeley. The display cases in which the poems were placed were surrounded by the paintings of those Abstract Expressionist artists who had passed through the college. Having seen this wondrous juxtaposition, I soon discovered the lack of critical writing on the symbiotic relationship between poetry and abstract painting at Black Mountain, and so the seeds of an idea for my PhD research project were sown at this revealing exhibition.

I would first of all like to thank Plymouth University for awarding me a Faculty of Arts Research Studentship (2011) that has enabled me to undertake this period of full-time study. While the institution and source of funding have made the research possible, so members of staff, fellow-researchers and my own undergraduate students have enriched the learning process. My writing has been enhanced by many conversations at Plymouth, as well as at several academic conferences in the UK where I have presented papers or read work-in-progress.

Throughout these four years, I have been extremely fortunate to be supervised and mentored by my inspirational Director of Studies, Anthony Caleshu, whose passion, dedication and insight has helped me at every stage along the way. I would also like to express my gratitude to Chris Cook, Angela Szczepaniak and Lytton Smith for their academic guidance and attentive supervision. Thank you for all your valuable contributions and assistance.

A special thank you to Cole Swensen for greeting me so warmly after my paper on Olson and Cy Twombly at the 'Writing into Art' Conference in Glasgow (2013), and for giving so generously of her time over those two days. Her enthusiasm for my research and her openness during our discussions were greatly appreciated. Thanks are also due to Henry Ferrini for sending me a DVD copy of his documentary *Polis Is This*, and for his correspondence.

I would like to record my gratitude to Rupert Loydell for introducing me to the full range of Creeley's collaborations with artists, and for continuing to publish my writing both on visual art and poetry in *Stride* magazine. I am most grateful to the staff at Woodlane Library in Falmouth, all of whom were especially kind and helpful while I was writing my thesis. I would like to thank all those who facilitated my research in the Doctoral Training Centre and Graduate School at Plymouth University, particularly Tim Batchelor and Sarah Kearns, who provided me with invaluable support.

I would also like to pay tribute to my mother, Doris Irene Gillies (1912-2009), who helped to finance my initial career shift from fine art to creative writing and who, I have come to realise during the span of this project, is always there in what I do.

Finally, there is no one I'm indebted to more than my wife, Ann Gillies, whose encouragement, creative sensibility and loving care enabled me to see this project through to completion.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Sub-Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

Relevant research seminars and academic conferences have been regularly attended at which several papers have been presented. Seminars, symposia and conferences attended include the following:

- 2012 'Contemporary Poetry and Source' Conference, Plymouth University, 18-20th May. Paper: 'Source in the Act: The Poetic Impulse from Abstract Painting at Black Mountain'.
- 2013 English Research Group Seminar, Plymouth University, 1st May. Paper: 'Scrawling Across an Open Field: Charles Olson & Cy Twombly'.
- 2013 'Writing into Art' Conference, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 18-19th June. Paper: 'Scrawling Across an Open Field: Charles Olson & Cy Twombly'.
- 2013 'Plymouth University and U.W.E., Bristol: Graduate Schools Residential PhD Conference', Buckland Hall, Brecon Beacons, 1st-4th July. Poetry Presentation: 'Poems to the Sea: A reading of work-in-progress'.
- 2014 'Writing Communities: People as Place' Conference, Falmouth University, 29-30th July. Paper: 'In Company: Poets and Painters at Black Mountain College'. Poetry Presentation: 'Poems to the Sea: A reading from work-in-progress'.
- 2014 'A Residential Postgraduate Conference: Life Beyond the PhD', Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, 26-29th August. Poetry Presentation: 'Poems to the Sea: A reading from work-in-progress'.
- 2016 'Contemporary Poetry: Thinking and Feeling' Conference, Plymouth University, 20-22nd May. Paper: 'Looping the Loop: Cy Twombly's Poetics of Paint'.
- 2016 'Transatlantic Studies Association: 15th Annual Conference', Plymouth University, 4-6th July. Practice-based Paper: 'From Black Mountain to Poems to the Sea'.

Word count of main body of thesis (including poetry collection): 60,093.

Peter Gillies

Abstracts:

Poems to the Sea

Rather than narrating or describing a work of visual art, the poems that form this collection show an accumulation, juxtaposition and realignment of material ranging from art historical detail and critique to a more personal, location specific response to works viewed in galleries and museums. Many of the poems engage with non-representational artworks and question how best to reflect, translate or expand upon their transformative effects. The first section, 'Museum Notes', explores Charles Olson's open field poetics by giving artists and writers a conversational voice. 'Sound Fields', the second section, responds to individual works of art and reflects a systems-based approach. The authorial voice within 'Poems to the Sea', the third section, is that of an artist involved in making a series of palimpsest drawings to capture a sense of place as drawing and writing overlaps and intertwines.

Painterly Poetics: Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Cole Swensen

This thesis explores three American poets from successive generations to examine three related types of engagement with visual art. As literary models that have informed my own poetic practice, Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Cole Swensen have theorized their own writing process to consider ways of using language to enhance the transmission and transcription of their visual stimuli and ideas. All three are interested in visual art as a model for the writing process: as a means of seeing, thinking and perceiving. After an introduction that surveys relations between verbal and visual art, a chapter is devoted to each of the three poets. In the opening and longest chapter, examples of Olson's writing are compared to the approach of several Abstract Expressionist painters who contributed to the culture of experimentation and spontaneity that emerged under Olson's leadership at Black Mountain College in the early 1950s. Following a discussion of Olson as a uniquely influential figure, the chapter on Creeley considers the role of visual art in his poetics. Swensen's writing is subsequently explored for its extension of the Black Mountain legacy: how she builds upon established critical methods to achieve what she calls 'a side-by-side, walking-along-with' relationship between the poem and the artwork.

Contents

Copyright Statement
Acknowledgements
Author's Declaration
Abstracts
Preface / 7

POEMS TO THE SEA:

MUSEUM NOTES / 17
SOUND FIELDS / 42
POEMS TO THE SEA / 67

Postscript / 92

PAINTERLY POETICS:

CHARLES OLSON, ROBERT CREELEY, COLE SWENSEN

INTRODUCTION / 102

1. Body: Voice / Arms Sweeping Wide
2. Ideogrammic Composition
3. Context: Energy and Process
4. Summary: New Possibilities

Chapter One: CHARLES OLSON / 126

1. Introduction
2. The Convergence of Projective Verse and Abstract Expressionism
3. Rhythm is Image: Charles Olson and Jackson Pollock
4. Figure and Field: Olson's *Maximus* and Pollock's *Autumn Rhythm*
5. Source in the Act: Olson and Robert Motherwell
6. Ancient and Modern Archaeology in Olson and Cy Twombly
7. A Thinking Dancer: Olson's 'Tyrian Businesses'
8. Painterly Process: Joseph Fiore, Willem de Kooning and Olson's 'LETTER 9'

Chapter Two: ROBERT CREELEY / 213

1. Introduction
2. In Company with Abstract Expressionism
3. Sinuous Gestures: Robert Creeley's 'Le Fou'
4. Cross-Influences: Creeley and Philip Guston
5. 'Numbers': Creeley and Frank Stella - Formal Issues
6. 'Numbers': Creeley and Robert Indiana - Collaboration

Chapter Three: COLE SWENSEN / 252

1. Introduction
2. Cole Swensen's Painterly Poetics
3. The Open Window: Swensen and Pierre Bonnard
4. Swensen's Framed 'Ghosts'

BIBLIOGRAPHY / 284

PREFACE

Poems to the Sea

As a dialogue between the verbal and the visual, my collection *Poems to the Sea* reflects an interdisciplinary mode of research that is interested in the relationship between poetry and painting: the poems present the process of writing as analogous to the process of painting, in that the speaker is always concerned with articulating the procedures of creative practice and the experience of someone working in both disciplines. Building through a series of experimental phases of composition, the totality and openness of this approach has allowed me to constantly explore the interdependence of these two mediums in my own creative work.

The influence of specific visual artists on poetic forms dominates the collection while many of the poems consider the poetic enactment of painterly gesture. The range and scope of the poetry reflects my preoccupation with artists from the last seventy years, in particular those who have been involved with Abstract Expressionism, Colour-Field Painting and Post-Painterly Abstraction. The intensity of the relationship between visual and poetic forms of expression at Black Mountain College in North Carolina (1933-57) was the starting point, and my awareness of the painterly aesthetic of painters and poets associated with the college has continued to underpin my poetic concerns. In constructing *Poems to the Sea*, it is the process of making the artwork that provides the catalyst for writing the poetry.

Black Mountain poetics is the active force that propels the collection: Charles Olson's concept of composition-by-field as expressed in his theory and practice of projective verse is ever-present. Although there are different kinds of poetic space and lineation

at work in each of the three sections, I wanted the sensation of open space to permeate *Poems to the Sea* by creating three versions of an airy space that would collectively suggest the condition of being at the edge of an ocean, experiencing the spaces of the beach, the sea and the sky; these felt intensities that, despite being intangible and enigmatic, aim to provide a sense of place. The over-riding influence is transatlantic, for I am fascinated by the work of painters and poets that reflects an American awareness of space that is more open and expansive compared with traditional British conceptions within the literary and visual arts.

My intention was for the poems to connect with Olson's sense of a boundless ocean continuing into infinity as he looked out from Gloucester, Massachusetts. Many of my notebook drafts, diagrammatic notes and preparatory visual studies make reference either to the rhythmic motion of the sea, or, to the play of sparkling patches of sunlight or moonlight on the surface of water, observed from staring out at the horizon line from Falmouth, Cornwall. Olson's writing provided the verbal counterpart to the spatial and painterly qualities I was seeking in my own work: that within certain poems (for example, those focusing on paintings by Piet Mondrian, Paul Klee, Joan Mitchell, Richard Diebenkorn, Agnes Martin and Cy Twombly), I could open-up the white page to utilize a similar interplay of energies that is present in their paintings, notably their rendering of an all-over visual field that radiates spatial patterns of shimmering light.

In the poems that form the opening section 'Museum Notes', artists and writers are brought together in conversation to explore their correspondences in attitude towards the creative process. A further dialogue is produced by the sequencing of these

twenty-four poems to reflect the speaker thinking moment-to-moment as they move from image-to-image, artist-to-artist, gallery-to-gallery, as the objects of their attention both explain and conceal themselves in terms of their own making. As a way of constructing each poem through this accrued experience of looking at and responding to 'process', I wanted to establish and underline a personal dynamic in my practice where the mediums of painting and writing are shown to be informing each other.

Successive exhibitions of work by my favoured artists provided vital opportunity for working in-situ so as 'to be with' the original artworks for extended periods: shows such as those of Twombly in London (2011, 2014) and Liverpool (2012); Martin in London (2011, 2015) and St Ives (2011); and Mondrian in London (2012) and Liverpool (2014), enabled me to make frequent gallery visits during the span of particular exhibitions. The role of notebooks, journals and sketchbooks was vital to my process. Using them in the galleries, I worked on written and drawn responses to the physical and material presence of the work as an object, as it was essential to get a textual process in motion. Taking notes, making lists, drawing diagrams, I aimed to find phrases not as description but as equivalent to the dominant forms and colours, the marks and gestures reverberating through an image. To reconfigure and distil this raw material away from the gallery, the process then became about how to manipulate these properties in making the poem, while still preserving one's initial emotional reaction when one was face-to-face with the actual work, absorbing the texture and qualities of paint along with the distinctive character of the brushstrokes.

In the development of these poems, the notebook activity in the gallery established an underlying ground to work on so that layers of text could subsequently be added to or removed in the same way that I would create an image on canvas. When making a painting, I obliterate and cast off parts of both the original and emerging image: similarly in constructing a poem, I will tear up, collage, ‘draw-into’ and ‘work-over’ with language instead of paint. Constantly revisiting the poems for the purpose of breaking up the lines and physically placing or replacing certain words and phrases, this approach of making a series of paper collages – a process where every element of text can be subjected to change through layering – was integral to the fabric of ‘Museum Notes’.

In writing *Poems to the Sea*, apart from conveying meaning, I wanted to acknowledge the materiality of language; that I was working with a medium that is sonic, visual and experiential. What began as a projective and spacial reading of Diebenkorn’s and Martin’s original paintings, especially their subtle atmospheric geometry loosely based upon the grid, shifted towards further considerations in the second section ‘Sound Fields’. My intention became to show more decisively how a poem embodies a relationship between the sound, the sense and the visual impression of words. The organisation of grids in this sequence allows for frequent repetition to intensify the physicality and presence of each unit of language so as to plot letters, words, phrases and sentences to be more ‘there’ on the page. Enveloped within the field, each component can act either as a descriptive or non-descriptive gesture, while contributing both to the sonic and visual rhythm of the poem.

One of the earliest poems in ‘Sound Fields’ was aimed at paralleling Willem de Kooning’s mode of making a gestural image. Concentrating on his stark calligraphic markings that have seeped into the weave of the canvas, in the poem these become elements of language transformed into pure sound. In the act of translating de Kooning’s adept painterly brushwork, one improvised sound races towards another as the content of the painting coalesces into tiny words, phonically emerging and disappearing as the poem moves along. As in other poems in the sequence, the emphasis on repetition through mirroring or multiplying a pattern for the sake of pace and rhythm, ‘pushes’ the poetic line towards a predetermined edge of a sonic and visual field. In some cases, the development of the grid depends upon the interplay of alternate lines running at two different speeds of travel in the same direction. As well as the visual image of the poem as a graphic work on the page, the entire sonic fabric of the poetic grid becomes charged by these rhythmically opposed but meshed forces of energy. This configuration allows qualities of sound and vision to merge with one another.

Attending to rhythmical and syntactical tensions within the grid relates to my study of paintings by Mondrian and Klee; both artists show how geometrical construction can be realized through intuition. The poems in ‘Sound Fields’ were also influenced by examples of procedural writing that I encountered in exhibitions of work by John Cage (Gateshead, 2010) and Carl Andre (Middlesbrough, 2013), especially the materiality of letters and words as ‘things’ that is evident in their poetry. Cage and Andre utilized cadences reminiscent of Gertrude Stein’s sound play: the way a poetic phrase can be used as a self-generating device. In ‘Sound Fields’ I adopted a similar approach to the repetition, inversion and different permutations of key words and

phrases; where each repeat becomes a new event that contributes significantly to the expressive density of the text, as well as a means of continuing and developing the poem.

Rather than remaining an almost anonymous observer of selected artworks, the speaker in the third and final section 'Poems to the Sea' adopts a more personal position. In moving closer to a lyrical mode, the struggle to make one's own work through the handling of materials is at the core of every poem. 'Poems to the Sea' began as sketches, paintings and diagrammatic renderings of a beach setting. These studies fed into a process of exploration whereby each poem discovered itself through my work in the studio where, over several weeks, I let visual and written detail accumulate on large sheets of watercolour paper, allowing image and text to fuse together in the act of composition.

To achieve a more open osmosis of ideas between the verbal and the visual, between the hand-written and the painted, between the page and the studio wall, I then developed a vast wall-based grid consisting of sixty A3-sized sheets. By emphasizing the physical actions of reaching up, down and across the sheets to superimpose words and gestural marks upon each other, this practice-as-research directly addressed the process of composition: the way I was 'making' a poem and how it could carry the essence of my painterly operation. By refusing to separate the acts of painting and writing in this studio work, I adopted a self-determining experimental mode primarily concerned with the material presence of the poem as a visual object. These preliminary studies filling the four walls of my studio became the formative drafts of 'Poems to the Sea'.

My study of visual art has inspired all three sections of the collection. In *Poems to the Sea* I have focused on constructing a sequence concerned with process and strategy; especially writing poems that ask what kinds of poetical response might be provoked by engaging with non-representational art, thereby continuing to translate and expand upon the transformative elements of such encounters in a gallery or studio situation.

POEMS TO THE SEA

PETER GILLIES

for Rosa

CONTENTS:

MUSEUM NOTES / 17

SOUND FIELDS / 42

POEMS TO THE SEA / 67

MUSEUM NOTES

JASPER JOHNS – W S GRAHAM

dead-ends / fresh starts & regrets:

take a canvas put a mark on it put another mark on it put another mark on it ...

forms veer from figurative to abstract but remain

spare / halfway

to equate

with objects:

relationships between them

with spaces:

that surround them

fast dissolving / evolving forms

around

one aloneness to another

that imaginary tone one positioned figure to another

temporal & spacial

verbal & visual become equalised resemblances
not so easily separated
in their greyness

each one less reliable than what came before

AGNES MARTIN – RENATA ADLER

her
undisturbed
state
maintained with paint

her
perception triggered
processed-in ruled-in to waves that

meander & flow sip & sweep over
the skins of everyday objects

of coming & going an impulse attracts

episodes to be recorded either as visual or aural mistakes
this is what matters ... that all the rest is only motion
I said emotion?
he said motion
there we were

on a manhattan roof with INDIANA & KELLY
for the archival photo
to then spend ideas in the studio

often whole hours of improbable luck with
a metre of thread 2 or 3 pencils
tied together let the drawings be flipped over

let them crease & stream
upside down

time-lines ahead / illusions & echoes

throw them around

25.06.11 – *The Minimal Gesture*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London
09.02.11 – *Agnes Martin: Artist Rooms*, Tate Modern, London

AGNES MARTIN – GERTRUDE STEIN

pale matrix: made to be tight / pencil traces refract multiply
 sightlines
 to lighten the square / axial
 release inside

knows ROTHKO had *reached for zero*
so that nothing could stand in the way

she approaches wide on no fear of falling into it

reads dawn-leading / dusk-leaning ideas

sun-struck images becoming these wavering all-over:

as TWO DIMENSIONAL: a series of lined linen sheets
 as SCORE: to sonically mark-up each of 8 notes
 as MATERIAL: absorbed into structure / left to action
 as MIRROR: to capture surface parts / no histories repeat

as PRESENTATION: what becomes indicative of glassy sea
 by
 kaleidoscopic similarity

painted / drawn pages facing down each day

allows *push sea push / sea push sea push sea*

weeks later silvery
 unruly notes written / regulated

with or without measuring

less rubbing out on an iridescent grid

03.09.11 – *Agnes Martin: Paintings – Summer Exhibition*, Tate St Ives
 11.06.15 – *Agnes Martin*, Tate Modern, London

KAZIMIR MALEVICH – MARK ROTHKO – LYNETTE ROBERTS

nuance / tone of every black square
 monochrome re-emerges
 as lessons elsewhere:

PLANE ENERGY = end point of a broad-edged pencil around it

SPATIAL ENERGY = uneven stroke of a full brush over it

introduces chaos / plays with instability

affirms at once

LINE & MASS	FULL & EMPTY
not as contradiction	to turn action into mark

FORMS DEFINE SPACE focusing on a breaking wave
 skirting its movement
 it was all endless return
 & spillage

tones whole & half to gain / sustain
 an elemental hold

involves intangible objects

where shapes rimmed red-violet
 swim lightweight like

dripping rust low on blue lined eddies of wind

13.08.14 – *Malevich*, Tate Modern, London

06.11.14 – *Mark Rothko: The Seagram Murals*, Tate Modern, London

JOAN MITCHELL – JAMES JOYCE

full
crimson
& vermillion

cobalt set low
on
cinnabar coat

book-marking episodes
in monet's old river-home

at vetheuil dizzy when
the heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit

was a gift
of glimpses
slipping:

opposite – pinks – kiss

positively – opposite – pink – skiss – pinsky – inks

reckless astral reds next to gold ribbons tumbling

14.03.12 – *Joan Mitchell: The Last Paintings*, Hauser & Wirth, London
25.11.11 – *Energy & Process*, Tate Modern, London

JOAN MITCHELL – OCTAVIO PAZ

flickering
 with mountains / clearings / solid points of reference

her
 swimming vision

shifts bends to a butterfly beach
 jagged

with
 ocean-mist-streaks
 left to veer out of sync
 into

quilted
 f-i-e-l-d-s

& ripple-effect grids

i think of the midwest snow ...
icy blue shadows

tide-marks clouds rain

call it voices or
 residues reached

blotched sand wet orange
 spliced between

swirling

u. l. t. r. a. *M A R I N E*

lapis lazuli

not for nothing means beyond the sea

fetching flowers – making colours – learning
 how light breaks diagonally

i saw the appearances / and i named that half hour

seeing now only the trceries are real

13.08.14 – *Making Colour*, The National Gallery, London
 14.03.12 – *Joan Mitchell: The Last Paintings*, Hauser & Wirth, London

RICHARD DIEBENKORN – ROBERT CREELEY

reserve of strength in ocean park
 tension beneath the calm
 when light
 finds divisions
 left o-p-e-n
 that resume
 recognisable shape
 faith to know
 when an edge is gaining through
 losing
 direction:
 geometric complexity an occasion to act upon
 sun's intensity at the window much like the day it all began
 crazy washed-out red not a pink but a white red
 whose eye caught what was going on
 -to
 blue -to fine grey -to indigo rose watery
 light
 gulfs of time between FIELDS
 BLOCKS
 SPACES aired as punctual surprises
 but using contained yet limitless
 surfaces of water to make grids with:
 abstract broken tri-coloured
 FIGURES PATHS LINES
 + +
 have to subside as they touch
 oblique / incomplete shapes
 tilted yellow against
 plain white
 falling
 as in
 angular currents owned by the wind

05.05.15 – Richard Diebenkorn, Royal Academy of Arts, London

CY TWOMBLY – GEOFF DYER

balanced horizon the freest place to be

compelling
connection

next

breath

gestures the run of it no definition

writing back to wilder shores:

a thousand small explosions of glitter

middle of the sea was dazzling

matters of space
matters of light
matters of noise

waterside

each crest of a wave connects threads through

reaches towards whiteness

three-quarters of the time

in that half-place between water & sky

resolves best

left

undone

stumbling with roman animation

quest turned back on itself

disrupts image & text

bends P A I N T I N T O W O R D S into

T I N T A D E N T R O L E P A R O L E

reducing seascape detail to a few lines & edges

intensified by rushing miles & miles / unfolding in wrong directions

colouring in from all sides

CY TWOMBLY – RAINER MARIA RILKE – CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

CAPITALS / CALLIGRAPHIC HEADINGS / TEXTURES / COLOUR NEEDS QUOTATIONS /
WORDS CALLIGRAPHIC NEED COLOUR / EVERYTHING LITERARY / PENCIL TO BEGIN
WITH / CANVAS WRITING BEGINS QUOTATION / TOP COLOURS BEGIN / NEED CANV-
AS / CALLIGRAPHIC BLACK OVER QUOTATIONS / BEGIN TEXTURE / CALLIGRAPHIC
TEXT / TEXTURE CALLIGRAPHIC / OVER LITERARY / BEGIN WORDS IN CALLIGRAPH-
IC BLACK / TOP COLOUR BEGINS / CALLIGRAPHIC CANVAS / OVER QUOTATIONS HE-
ADINGS IN COLOUR / WRITE HEADINGS IN SPIDERY-LITERARY COLOUR / USE TEXT-
URE / USE LITERARY-SPIDERY WRITING / USE CANVAS COLOUR / USE CAPITALS:

not too late for escape
could find ways
to madcap
victory sp-ACE
other side of air

WIN-d-on-the-WIN-g
air victory ACE / to r-ACE
to es-CAPE on the winning WIN-g
of this MAD-ness

air victory
es-CAPER

air
outside felt
 thinner

as mad
as the other
amazing s-PACE

viceroy
victory p-ACE

false starts & fragments / quicksilver glances / blasts of makeshift flame
another side of air

charts / chants / puts out
 held as arched fragments of 'o'
 schism
 & what it evokes
 as r e m n a n t:
 o r p h e u s
 an *unending trace of veins*
 in lilting profile vividly returning

 of which every zero

 maps an extra trace where one sees what one wants to:
 short text on
 w h i t e b e d
 relentlessly overwritten

 ringing that shatters
 with
 invention

 in one side / goes out the other

 improvising upon myth
 with outsized
 inscription

 comes over
 kicking back
 in phonetic counting

filled with the sensation of white snow against black water
the way the whiteness erases all the detail

 a phantom
 floored by
 musical semblance
 in low squares of light

DAVID SMITH – JOHN ASHBERRY

space could only hurt him / or agree with him
 who toyed with ice-cold / oil splattered bits

graded to size

in spite of
 no
 compatibility

chalking their outlines on the floor
 ready to rephrase pieces

heat-damaged & faded

walking
 so
 big a space to build it

all

hammered / beaten / wrenched
 from beneath stacked sleepers

free of travel back & forth

between

albany & poughkeepsie

CARL ANDRE – DAVID SMITH – GERTRUDE STEIN

simple
weather-beaten

monuments that form
this american grid

as numbers

that break into entries /

headings / places
them
to
interchange them

*every time there is an exception there is an exception
& every time there is a division there is a division*

scrap iron found
from
along the tracks:

hooks
springs
bearings

carefully laid out

9 more displaced parts stutter & resound

sideways

restored

12.09.13 – *Carl Andre: Mass & Matter*, Middlesbrough Institute of Art
07.09.13 – *David Smith: Sculptures / Energy & Process*, Tate Modern, London

TACITA DEAN – GEOFF DYER – RICHARD DIEBENKORN

jagged texture coated with sober
change

her gaze expands interior space like JOHN CAGE

wants *a way of thinking about sound & vision*
like the way thunder & lightning are

cathedral choir
going past
glazed-over heads
emblematic of the dead:

bare view reduced to
chiaroscuro
patchwork-grabs

demotic where the response takes up the call & pitches it back

colour disrupts as stop-go jabs

ghosts in a stained glass window

evensong as elegy

stripped down & polished
week after week

bay-area jazz as haphazard warm-up act

17.12.14 – *Archive Exhibition*, Sheffield Cathedral
21.10.11 – *Tacita Dean: FILM 2011*, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London
29.07.09 – *Colour Chart: Reinventing Colour*, Tate Liverpool

TACITA DEAN – ROBERT CREELEY

black light pressed into a black surface
 bends numerical sense / 7 boards in 7 days
 as her sequence of wrecks:
 1st chalk
 storyboard 3pm / roaring 40s / same flux as an angry sea
 breakdown of signs into more splintering account
 numbers words letters
 stretched / get width
 to weigh
 configure
 narrate romantic depth with contoured shade
 figures frozen out
 in a milky shift of paralysis revered in
 stills / their chronologies
 of arms / hips & chins flying imperfectly across
 bisect the air
 mast coming apart
 parking with a rhythmic thump as the binding breaks:
 rising / sinking in time like the collective breath
 of a wipe-out
where everything has the quality of a photographic negative
 weird blacked-out lightships stand half-erased
 go again tomorrow
 will persevere / steer / whiten as though
 perilous in monochrome
 so every stroke fights against its own disappearance

CALLUM INNES – JORIE GRAHAM

VISCOUS GREEN DOWN & OVER / GLOSS WHITE TOP SIDE / MATT BLACK WASH OVER CANVAS - **TRAP TURPENTINE ON RIGHT SIDE** / CENTRE-TO-LEFT MATT BLACK / CENTRE-TO-RIGHT VISCOUS GREEN / MASK DOWN SAME LINE FOR SINGLE BLACK PAINT - **BLEED-IN TURPENTINE ON RIGHT SIDE** / MATT PAINT OVER SINGLE GREEN TO RIGHT / MASK WHITE GLOSS TO BLACK CANVAS / LEAVE SAME VISCOUS GREEN ON TOP - **WASH-IN TURPENTINE ON RIGHT SIDE** / BLACK PAINT DOWN CENTRE / LEAVE ON VISCOUS GREEN SAME WAY / MASK OVER MATT BLACK TO WHITE CANVAS TOP - **DROP-IN TURPENTINE ON RIGHT SIDE**

SEA / EARTH / SKY no longer deep in the shadows of themselves joined by
a 3 millimetre sliver etched through the centre of a vast projective field

resonant choice of 3 distinct zones:

BLACK / OLIVE / WHITE voices exposed *slippery against it where it
never knows they are pressing delirious accents trying to reach in fit / in*

rest in a dark red quarter consigned yet
slowly warping

T-square green lake
escapes
bifurcates making the painter's labour visible
through ritual moves layers go
although
ongoing hues
drift aside with each repetition

09.04.13 – *Callum Innes*, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
25.06.11 – *Callum Innes: New Paintings*, Frith Street Gallery, London

BARNETT NEWMAN – OCTAVIO PAZ

beginning in one place & finding yourself in another

that every stroke one makes is violent
... you've got to move with

the weight of red
 burgundy stripe
eve is land
 is landslide

eve is red
 stepping
 testament
 of
 burgundy
 might

painted *eve* / evening
 starts here & finds uneven
 change
 in human height

earth brown with zips
adam / all slightly skewed

this badly taped
 central band provides feeling

but
 numbed by process

for in hebrew
adamah is earth *adom* is red

while *dam* is blood

to be teased-out
 in

gaps *lighter than water / lighter than air / lighter than lips*

PIET MONDRIAN – DON DELILLO

different in every kind of weather
whiteness

runs off horizons begins to act

cleansing white smoothly
slides

facing

percussive white casting
around
outside of

his poetics:
scans wide
thinking out space
measuring

left from grey

to white
going right / going down
all sides

 L I G H T

 T U R Q U O I S E
 t o g r e e n / g r e y

light -----
small square / opaque red

five colours

classified

catalogued this colour for that ...

jutting

crisscrossing in streaks & tremors

refracting surfaces _____ abstracting a seascape sky

07.08.14 – *Mondrian & his Studios*, Tate Liverpool

14.03.12 – *Mondrian & Nicholson: In Parallel*, The Courtauld Gallery, London

21.11.13 – *Ana Mendieta: Traces*, The Hayward Gallery, London

PAUL KLEE – LEE HARWOOD

sensations dreams concepts to render them visible
as imaginary scripts:

*move your whole body / to make the marks a flow of sorts
paint the character for 'sea' again & again*

figure ways
to translate

a line losing itself / a line growing stronger

weaving in & out / your experience of space

of things incomplete or faint:

luminously strange
hint of horizon between sea & sky

dematerializes through looking

to track material intervals tentative limits
on
different
kinds

of paper size

to trace around pebbles

set them down as a series of fractional squares

before they dissolve

PHILIP GUSTON – DYLAN THOMAS

be careful
 not to squeeze the life out of it

 to guard against this
 by
 incessant
 recomposing

 glimmers of self analysis in his grey zones /

 an overdose of sourcing:

 the brassy orator / laying my ghost in metal

 handles
 stark paint

 for his forms escalate:
 figures returning
 grooved together

 jostling each other a little

 spontaneous strokes cajole /

 anticipate them

 in repetition deletion

 faces
 rotate
 to jettison

 ominous signs
 hovering wide

13.08.14 – *Philip Guston: Paintings / Energy & Process*, Tate Modern, London
 25.06.11 – *The Minimal Gesture*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London

ALEX KATZ – COLE SWENSEN

turn to
token stencils on
full moon

terrain stepping
towards nightly
fenced-in
prussian blue

medium range present tense present state
where we shatter / into patterns / counting threads

more dark walk past walk out observing stars

sky slanting throws
a field to float
while holding

off-set edges

to trace / fake / take
less of
an insomniac's mood

going into mineral / november time faced-as-skeletal

wrought through missing texture: relative & made with reason

corrodes
below
reflective
glaze

12.09.13 – Alex Katz: *Beneath the Surface*, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art
22.06.12 – Alex Katz: *Give Me Tomorrow*, Tate St Ives

HIROSHI SUGIMOTO – CHARLES OLSON

channels / lakes / rivers
 fleeting traces of wind

 coaxed out of long exposures

 & behind this emptiness

 LINES PLANES POINTS

 these are means

 emulsified
 as borderlines

 digested down

 dark & thick
 from night
 & its
 B L A C K
 L I G H T

 gently
 animates / agitates
 imposes
 exposes

 harsh geometry
 on smooth
 matt
 seas
 searching
 for movement / countermovement

 it lures us to abstraction –

 eyes at a place
 to put arms out:

*on dogtown the other side of heaven
 is ocean*

 though alert to all voices in between

PIERRE SOULAGES – JAMES JOYCE

as reminder
all that experimentation
see stars fading
into darkness:
stacked blacks
those facts
of cross-cutting grey
by the second going blacker
time painting it = excessive
before it
hints at a spoiled point of day
ill-defined & passing sleight of hand
throws up highlights
& accumulates time

WHITENESS = A DOUBLE BIND

watch any moist heavy sea / coming from the blackness:

an emotive double blindness in
eye-catching spotlights

OPEN FORMS SHORELINE WAVES RIPPLING SLATE TIDAL NIGHT

*he would caligulate by multiplicables the altitude & malltitude
until he saw by neatlight*

therefore opposites respect
elemental offshore noise

25.06.10 – *Pierre Soulages: Paintings*, Bernard Jacobson Gallery, London

SOUND FIELDS

angled**licorice**bend ... (**greystogether** / **jasperjohnsregrets**)... material**worlddead**
ends ... let**entangledlicoricebend** ... (**greystogether** / **jasperjohnsregrets**) ... **mat**
erialworlddeadends ... let**entangledlicoricebend** ... (**greystogether** / **jasperjohnsre**
grets) ... **materialworlddeadends** ... let**entangledlicoricebend** ... (**greystogether** /
jasperjohnsregrets) ... material**worlddeadends** ... let**entangledlicoricebend** ... (g
 reystogether / **jasperjohnsregrets**) ... **materialworlddeadends** ... let**entangledlicor**
icebend ... (**greystogether** / **jasperjohnsregrets**) ... **materialworlddeadends** ... la
 r**gegrey** / **bluedome** ... (**eyesocketsjaw&nose** / **hisownfolds**) ... source**imageofluci**
anfreudsuperimposed ... (**fleshlikemetal** / **distressedfilmroll**) ... **largegrey** / **blued**
ome ... (**eyesocketsjaw&nose** / **hisownfolds**) ... **sourceimageoflucianfreudsuperim**
posed ... (**fleshlikemetal** / **distressedfilmroll**) ... let**angledgreysregretdead** ... (mat
 erial**endstogether**) ... john**slicoricejasperworld** ... grey**endtangleddead** ... (john**sre**
gretshisownfolds) ... **greyfleshlikegreymetaldistressed** ... imposed**filmends** ... (ey
 es**largesuperbluetherangledtogether**) ... johnsregrets**jasperjohnspose** ... distresse
 nds ... (**distressedjohnsregrets**) ... **johnslastimposedregrets** ... **jasperjohnsregrets**

JASPER JOHNS
Regrets, 2012-13

*the four-story mountain / you will not think form-space-line-contour
 just a suggestion of nature gives weight / light & heavy / light like a
 empty form goes all the way to heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty
 feather / you get light enough & you levitate / the four-story mountain
 you will not think form-space-line-contour / just a suggestion of nature
 form goes all the way to heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty form
 gives weight / light & heavy / light like a feather / you get light enough
 goes all the way to heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty form goes
 & you levitate / the four-story mountain / you will not think form-space
 line-contour / just a suggestion of nature gives weight / light & heavy
 all the way to heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty form goes all the
 light like a feather / you get light enough & you levitate / the four-story
 mountain / you will not think form-space-line-contour / just a suggestion
 way to heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty form goes all the way to
 of nature gives weight / light & heavy / light like a feather / you get light
 enough & you levitate / the four-story mountain / you will not think form
 heaven | the observer makes the painting | an empty form goes all the way to heaven
 space-line-contour / just a suggestion of nature gives weight / light &
 heavy / light like a feather / you get light enough & you levitate / the four*

AGNES MARTIN
This Rain, 1960
The Islands, 1961
Night Sea, 1963

BLACKSQUARE REDCROSS WHITEONWHITESQUA
REBLACKQUADRILATERALREDSQUAREBLACKCR
OSSOFFSQUAREREDSHAPEBLACKONBLACKSQUA
RE REDQUADRILATERALOFFSQUAREBLACKSHAP
EREDONREDSQUARE OFFSQUARE WHITESHAPEW
HITECROSSWHITESQUAREBLACKSQUAREREDCR
OSSWHITEONWHITESQUAREBLACKQUADRILATE
RALREDSQUAREBLACKCROSSOFFSQUAREREDSH
APEBLACKONBLACKSQUAREREDQUADRILATERA
LOFFSQUAREBLACKSHAPEREDONREDSQUAREOF
FSQUAREWHITESHAPE WHITECROSSWHITESQUA
REBLACKSQUAREREDCROSSWHITEONWHITESQU
AREBLACKQUADRILATERALREDSQUAREBLACKC
ROSSOFFSQUAREREDSHAPEBLACKONBLACKSQU
ARE REDQUADRILATERALOFFSQUARE BLACKSHA
PEREDONREDSQUAREOFFSQUAREWHITESHAPEW
HITECROSS WHITESQUAREBLACKSQUAREREDCR
OSSWHITEONWHITESQUAREBLACKQUADRILATE
RALREDSQUAREBLACKCROSSOFFSQUAREREDSH

KAZIMIR MALEVICH
Black Square, 1915

BLACKSQUAREREDCROSSWHITEONWHITESQUAR
EBLACKQUADRILATERALREDSQUAREBLACKCRO
SSOFFSQUARE REDSHAPEBLACKONBLACKSQUAR
EREDQUADRILATERALOFFSQUARE BLACKSHAPE
RED ONREDSQUAREOFFSQUAREWHITESHAPEWHI
TECROSSWHITE SQUAREBLACKSQUAREREDCROS
SWHITE ONWHITESQUAREBLACKQUADRILATERA
LREDSQUAREBLACKCROSSOFFSQUARE REDSHAP
EBLACKONBLACKSQUAREREDQUADRILATERALO
FFSQUARE BLACKSHAPEREDONREDSQUAREOFFS
QUAREWHITESHAPEWHITECROSSWHITESQUARE
BLACKSQUARE REDCROSS WHITEONWHITESQUA
REBLACKQUADRILATERALREDSQUAREBLACKCR
OSSOFFSQUAREREDSHAPE BLACKONBLACKSQUA
REREDQUADRILATERAL OFFSQUAREBLACKSHAP
EREDONREDSQUARE OFF SQUAREWHITESHAPE W
HITECROSSWHITESQUAREBLACKSQUARERED CR
OSSWHITE ONWHITESQUAREBLACKQUADRILATE
RALREDSQUAREBLACKCROSSOFFSQUAREREDSH

KAZIMIR MALEVICH
Black Square, 1923

c a d m i u m y e l l o w d e e p i v o r y b l a c k

i n d i a n r e d c r i m s o n o v e r c o b a l t
v e n e t i a n r e d

n a p l e s y e l l o w

o c h r e
y e l l o w
o c h r e

o v e r

c r i m s o n c o b a l t

RICHARD DIEBENKORN
Ocean Park 90, 1976

lllll l i d AXE j a r rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrzzzz z o t DOT s k y yyyyyyy
 yyyyyyyyyyyyyyooooo o n e JAM l o t tttttttttttt t i p ZOT a x e
 eeeeeeeeeeZZZZZZZZ z o t LID t i p ppppppppppoooooooooooooooooo
 oooooooooo o n e SKY z o t tttttttttttttttttttjjjjj j i p JAR j o t tttt
 ttttttkkkkkkkkkk k i n ZOT s a c ccccccccccccrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
 rrr r u n LIP d o t tttttttttsssssssssssss s k y SAC s o y yyyyyyy
 yyyyyyyZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ z o t AGE d i p ppppppppaaaaaaaaaa
 aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa a x e JAM d o t tttttttttttaaa a g e KIN z o t tttt
 tttttttttttssss s o y LID l i p pppppppkkkkkkkk k i n ZIP j a r rrrrrrr
 rrrrrrrjujujikrrrrrrrrrrjujujikrrrrrrrrrrjujujikrrrrrrrrrrzzzz z o t DOT
 ttttrrrrrjujujikrrrrzzz z o t DIP pppprrrrrjujujikrrppp p o p ZOT tttttt
 ttttttrrrjujujikrrrrzzz z o t DUT c h f ORF o o l ISH zotdotzotdotzotdot
 zotdotzotddd d u t CHF o r f OOL i s h hhhhfoolishfoolishfoolishfool
 lllllfffff f o r DOU b l e DUT c h e eeeseeforfoolishforfoolishforfool
 llfffordotfordotfordotfordotfordotforddd d o u BLE d u t CHE eeeeeese

WILLEM DE KOONING
Zot, 1949

i have felt the Wind of the Wing of Madness

june

CT

VICTORY

90

outside as amazing space

gaeta

as the other side of

AI R

the

Conquistador

dor es

CY TWOMBLY
Untitled, 1992

felt wind of the wing where outside as amazing space other side of air felt wind
 of the wing where outside as amazing space where outside amazing space felt
 wind of the wing other side of air where outside as amazing space other side of
 air felt wind of the wing felt wind of the wing felt wind of the wing other side
 of air felt wind of the wing other side of air where felt wind of the wing other
 side of air felt wind other side of air where outside as amazing space felt wind
 of the wing other side of air felt wind of the wing other side of air other side of
 air felt wind of the wing other side of air felt wind of the wing other side of air
 other side of air felt wind of the wing another side of air felt wind of the wing
 other side of air felt wind of the wing other side of air felt wind madness other
 side of air felt wind madness another side of air where the wing of madness felt
 wind of the wing felt wind madness felt wind of the wing another side of air the
 wing of madness another side of air felt wind of the wing felt wind madness felt
 wind of the wing another side of air felt wind of the wing other side of air other
 side of air felt wind of the wing amazing space other side of air felt wind of the
 wing felt wind of the wing other side of air felt wind of the wing of another side
 of space amazing air the other side of space amazing where another side of air
 felt wind madness where other side of air where outside as amazing space on
 the other side of air have felt the wind of the wing of madness as on other sides
 of air where outside as amazing space felt wind of the wing another side of air

CY TWOMBLY
Untitled, 1992

only in that **d**ouble **w**orld / or**p**heus **w**hen **h**e first sang / we **f**l**u**tter in mid-air / voices **s** altered
 that **o**utlasts these **s**ur**p**luses / she **h**eard in shadow / w**e** **f**l**u**tter in mid-air / edge**s** shredded
 in a gale n**o**w chatte**r**ing Or**p**heus when **h**e first sang / that **o**utlasts the**s**e surpluses / only
 one wh**o** can raise the lyre / she hea**r**d in shadow / Or**p**heus w**h**en **h**e first sang / that **o**ut-
 lasts these **S**urpluses / only in that double-w**o**rd whe**r**e the lyre was lifted / that outlasts these
 sur**p**luses / edges s**h**redded in a gale now chate**e**ring / only in that do**u**ble world / only one
 who can rai**s**e the lyre / only in that d**o**uble world / she hea**r**d in shadow / that outlasts these
 sur**p**luses ringing the un**h**eard of cor**e** / we fl**u**tter in mid-air / orpheu**s** when he first sang
 only in that d**o**uble wo**r**ld / or**p**heus w**h**en **h**e first sang / we fl**u**tter in mid-air / rai**s**e

CY TWOMBLY
Orpheus, 1979

words double **C**rossed

over surfaces **Y**et more condensed

phrases pic**T**ured imperfectly

for **W**ho can see

col**O**urs shot through with

cadences so **M**onumental

they are **B**ricolaged

on 2 sheets of **L**oose off-square paper

& in italian **Y**our gorgeous mimicry

CY TWOMBLY
Petals of Fire, 1989

content: window – cakes with neighbours – their southern drawl / **next up:** content / **next:** studio or cakes / hesitates / **content:** cakes – hesitates with neighbours cakes with neighbours / or hesitates with his cakes / **content:** neighbours watch his window or briefly next door / inside studio – draws / outside parks-up / **content:** door / hesitates – his content – draws / **neighbours:** next window – southern drawl / park-up with cakes / **content:** hesitates briefly – his studio for cakes – he hesitates / **next:** content – he hesitates / **content:** cakes – hesitates – cakes / content – hesitates – door – hesitates briefly / **window:** neighbours next door outside of studio – their southern drawl / park-up / **next:** draws / **door:** his content / door

neighbours – hesitates – drawls – hesitates / **content:** his studio door – reads or he draws – hesitates – drawls / **content:** reads – hesitates / door / or briefly hesitates – his content / **next:** reads – window – next southern drawl – parks-up with cakes / **window:** content – hesitates briefly – their cakes – hesitates with neighbours cakes or with neighbours at the door / hesitates – his cakes / **content:** neighbours watch his window or briefly next door / **next-up:** their southern drawl / neighbours park-up – buy cakes – studio window – studio door / **neighbours:** next window – next southern drawl – studio or cakes / hesitates / draws / **content:** his window / neighbours – reads / hesitates – or draws / **content:** his southern drawl

TACITA DEAN
Edwin Parker (16mm film), 2011

[] *film as time made manifest: time as physical length* []
 [] *24 frames per second 16 frames in a 35mm foot --* []
 [] *-- as celluloid film-strip dense as stained glass with* []
 [] *sprocket holes on either side -- need the stuff of film* []
 [] *as a painter needs the stuff of paint - metamorphosis* []
 [] *or shadow play in portrait format -- rhythm & metre* []
 [] *from the material itself -- in the soft shove of a glass* []
 [] *globe's curve of resistance --- shimmering of a colour* []
 [] *filter change ----- widens into steps & reconvenes as* []
 [] *as architectural play ----- flickering projected image* []
 [] *offers some surrealist surprise --- flash frames of over* []
 [] *exposure as the camera stops & starts -- make a late* []
 [] *party of fountains & light ----- montage shots inter-* []
 [] *weaving the real & artificial world -- cross-coloured* []
 [] *giants climb mountain-peaks wearing over-polished* []
 [] *shoes - flickers & fades phantasmagorically before us* []
 [] *as a barely moving escalator signposted with cerulean* []
 [] *dots --- those 24 gaps per second of blackness -- as a* []
 [] *shore-line musical ensemble vanishes under a dark &* []
 [] *crinkled viridian leaf ----- contains no post-production* []

TACITA DEAN
FILM (35mm film), 2011

w h i t e
w h i t e
w h i t e
i v o r y
b l a c k
w h i t e

CALLUM INNES
Ivory Black, 2001

relations of scale this special view:	or just sensing /	faced with
<i>it's not that I'm bigger than the ocean</i>		
<i>it's that somehow I'm in that</i>	S P A C E	
<i>I'm really involved in</i>		
<i>it's true</i>	P	
	A	
measuring	C	
to gain	E	
plain knowledge from		
looking through & over	a surface as FIELD	
opening as		
vast expanse	add	
band of colour = GAP	= thin rip	
the sum becomes	sensation + exhilaration	
	in columns	
poignant		
parallel points	Z	
of the ZIP interrupt		
	I	
to exaggerate SPACE / mark		
height / width	P	
as if		
from a bridge		
or cliff to create / inspire		
the entire design of the painting		
call them zips or strips		
or strings		
or glittering		
flickering	occasions	
<u>HER</u> : bright cadmium orange with		
burgundy stripe running along right edge		
<u>HIM</u> : earth brown		
with intervals	3 hues of red	

BARNETT NEWMAN
Eve, 1950 / *Adam*, 1952

mock-up
 of paris workroom to walk around | years before his new york grids
 | _____

[in rue-du-depart go
 past gare montparnasse]
 where

green cross-pieces of _____
 starlit night became
pier en oceaen 1915

gained & affixed
 | | _____ by _____ oval ascent
 jazz _____ | |
 _____ waves | duration / rhythm |

2nd state composition:
 | | _____
 _____ *the perpetual movement of changing oppositions*

taking opinions for
double lines & yellow 1936-44
 transatlantic from starting over / draws
 inclined not to hope

but _____ | | | _____
 hoping for
 its finish _____ | | _____ black-held-guide / contours
 buckled

ghosting
 | _____ | || _____

no
 grey (= eliminated colour) | _____ | 3 across || rests against || 3 more

incomplete
 unrestrained charcoal tracks make a palimpsest

bound stripes & planes dissolve can't quite copy themselves

Reconstructed Paris Studio of PIET MONDRIAN
 after a photograph (1926) by PAUL DELBO, 2014

b r o w n m a d d e r
 s c a r l e t l a k e
 p e r m a n e n t m a g e n t a
 a l i z a r i n c r i m s o n
 r e d o c h r e
 m a r o o n s e p i a m a r o o n
 c a d m i u m r e d d e e p

MARK ROTHKO
Four Darks in Red, 1958

of identically sized blocks are columns of identical cedar / column units with cedar titles sized identically / cedar identically sized simply arranged / cedar is to a degree
 CEDAR PIECE 1959 / MAPLE FRENCH CURVE EXERCISE 1959 / PYRAMID 1959 / PYRAM
 ee cedar composed as columns / together are blocks sized into columns to vertical-
 ly form simply arranged columns of identically sized blocks / cedar identically siz-
 ID (VARIATION ON SQUARE PLAN) 1959 / QUINCY SLOT WORK 1959 / TIMBER SPOOL
 ed & simply arranged / cedar is to a degree vertical columns / vertical forms put si-
 mply vertical / simple cedar arranged into blocks / arranged units of identically siz-
 EXERCISE 1959 / LAST LADDER 1959 / TIMBER PIECE (WELL) 1964 / FIRST TREE BONE
 ed blocks of cedar arranged to size / with cedar titles sized identically / cedar iden-
 tically sized & arranged simply / cedar is to a degree identically sized blocks / ced-
 1969 / TIMBER PIECE (WELL) 1970 / REDAN 1970 / TAU & RIGHT THRESHOLD (ELEMEN-
 ar identically arranged & simply sized / cedar to a degree is simply cedar with titl-
 es arranged identically / cedar formed into sized blocks simply sized / identically
 NT SERIES) 1971 / INVERTED HENGE (MEDITATION ON THE YEAR 1960) 1971 / UNCA-
 sized blocks are columns / cedar identically sized simply arranged are rows of ced-
 ar columns titled & sized identically / cedar placed into rows of blocks simply siz-
 RVED BLOCKS 1975 / SECANT 1977 / TRISKAIDEK 1979 / PHALANX 1981 / PHILEMON
 ed identically / blocks identically sized as columns / cedar identically sized simply
 arranged as rows with cedar titles sized & arranged identically / units as cedar blo-
 1981 / BAUCIS 1981 / ROMAYTYR 1989 / PYRAMUS & THISBE 1990 / GLARNISH-STAR-
 cks form columns simply arranged / blocks as columns in 90-degree rows / units in
 columns composed together in rows / titled as cedar simply arranged & sized in ro-
 URN 2001 / COPPER TIMBER 2003 / CEDAR SOLID 2008 / 9TH CEDAR CORNER 2007 / CE-

CARL ANDRE
Timber-based Pieces, 1959-2007

phrases songs single forms as individual formal graphic vertical arrangements / existing forms vertical columns invoke graphic columns of single words / column-TYPEWRITER ON PAPER XEROX LIMITED EDITIONS: FIRST FIVE POEMS 1958 / ROSE ns translate as actual musical structural columns / columns invoke musical structure that underpins songs / literary translations vertical formal columns / graphic co-WEDGE 1959 / VISAS 1960 / MAP OF POETRY – AUTOBIOGRAPHY MAN RUNNING 1961 lumns as song structure phrases songs alphabetically as song-phrases graphic words underpinning / alphabetically invoking vertical single word-songs graphically- / DITHYRAMB 1962 / A MAN CARRYING A SAXOPHONE 1963 / ONE HUNDRED SONNE underpinned / musical vertical graphic forms existing as song-words / alphabetically invoke single vertical word-songs graphically underpinned / graphically verti-ETS – MOON 1963 / ONE HUNDRED SONNETS – TWO 1963 / AMERICA DRILL 1963 / POE cal vertically graphic invokes musical structure form invokes structural single columns / invokes length invokes single columns musical song structure / literary t-M FOR THREE VOICES 1963 / ONE HUNDRED SONNETS – I ... FLOWERS 1963 / BLUE ... ranslations vertical formal columns / alphabetically invoke single vertical word-songs graphically underpinned / words translate underpinned words in formally stru-STEP 1964 / RED CUT 1964 / BEAM ... ROOM 1966 / LEVERWORDS 1966 / MAP OF POET ctured columns / song-structure alphabetically translates invokes sonnets / musical vertical graphic forms existing as song-words / words translate underpinned wo-RY – SCULPTURE WORDS 1966 / SCATTER PIECE 1966 / STILL A NOVEL 1972 / CITY OS rds in formally structured columns / translates literature / columns invoke musical structure that underpins songs / columns translate musical column-structure / mus-TRICHES FOREHEAD 1972 / SEARCH-JOURNEY-RUINED 1972 / ART-RITE COVER 1976

CARL ANDRE
Text-based Pieces, 1958-1976

BLACKSQUARE REDCROS
RE BLACK QUADRILATER
OSS OFFSQUARE REDSHA
RE RED QUADRILATERAL
EREDONREDSQUARE OFF
HITECROSS WHITE SQUA
OSS WHITEONWHITE SQU
RALREDSQUAREBLACKC
APEBLACKONBLACKSQU
LOFFSQUARE BLACKSHA

HITECROSS WHITESQUA
OSS WHITEONWHITESQU
AL RED SQUARE BLACKC
PE BLACKONBLACK SQU
OFF SQUARE BLACK SHA
FSQUARE WHITESHAPEW
E BLACK SQUARE REDCR
ARE BLACKQUADRILATE
ROSSOFFSQUARE REDSH

KAZIMIR MALEVICH
4 Squares, 1915

BLACKSQUAREREDCROSSWHITEONWHITESQUAR
EBLACKQUADRILATERALREDSQUAREBLACKCRO
SSOFFSQUARE REDSHAPEBLACKONBLACKSQUAR
EREDQUADRILATERALOFFSQUARE BLACKSHAPE
RED ONREDSQUAREOFFSQUAREWHITESHAPEWHI
TECROSSWHITE SQUAREBLACKSQUAREREDCROS
SWHITE ONWHITESQUAREBLACKQUADRILATERA
LREDSQUAREBLACKCROSSOFFSQUARE REDSHAP
UAREREDQUADRILATERALO
PE REDONREDSQUARE OFFS
WHITECROSSWHITESQUARE
ROSS WHITEONWHITESQUA
ERAL REDSQUAREBLACK CR
HAPE BLACKONBLACKSQUA
AL OFFSQUAREBLACK SHAP
OFF SQUAREWHITESHAPE W
UARE BLACKSQUARERED CR
QU ARE BLACKQUADRILATE
CKCROSSOFFSQUAREREDSH

KAZIMIR MALEVICH

Black & White Suprematist Composition, 1915

zero light / giddiness / no restraint / late canvas / outlined black / cartoon-like

*there is a guy lying in bed eating a bunch of french fries
imagining this pile of stuff above him*

things on top of other things like heaped-up shoes lined up with their soles showing
fries ketchup brush pots a hand paints another shoe not painstaking not some-
thing mystical puts head on his pillow his bed his cigarette light bulb window
blind & string peeking at routine things in a tense situation: horizontal painter with
just one beady eye lays peeking at stays until paint on his brush gets used up

zero light / giddiness / no restraint / late canvas / outlined black / cartoon like
zero light / giddiness / no restraint / late canvas / outlined black / cartoon-like
zero light / giddiness / no restraint / late canvas / outlined black / cartoon-like

PHILIP GUSTON
Painting Smoking Eating, 1973

s i e n n a
 r o s e p i n k g e r a n i u m l a k e
 s a p g r e e n
 t r a n s p a r e n t y e l l o w
 b u r n t u m b e r l a m p b l a c k

HELEN FRANKENTHALER
Fiesta, 1973

O	P	E	N						
F	L	L	E	fetch	leeward	long waves	ebb		
F	U	E	A	fusion	underneath	energy	across		
S	N	M	R	slate	navigation	maritime	ripple		
H	G	E	S	heavy sea	generating	eye-catching	spotlights		
O	E	N	H	other	expand	night	history		
R		T	O	range		tide	opposite		
		A	R			arranged	respect		
		L	E			lunar / solar	emblem		

OPEN: the offshore plunge is elemental near the shoreline
 it fetches leeward into long waves it even ebbs (as the moon does) into fusion
 underneath that energises as if across slate
 while our navigation is maritime a rippling
 heavy sea might generate eye-catching spotlights other expansive night histories
 range across tidal opposites
 what we arrange as respect adds another lunar or solar emblem

	OPEN:	plunge	near the shoreline
leeward	waves		into fusion
	across slate		
	while		rippling
might generate			night histories
across tidal opposites			
	as respect		

PIERRE SOULAGES
Peinture 5th Janvier, 2008

slate rippling slate

 night **tidal** night

slow grey graphite

-----*D E R E V N Y A*-----

subtracts colour – writes *DEREVNYA* across a drawing – makes something mystical out of it on small paper – frames a word as a thing among things – forming letters as sugared-up noir

V I L L A G E

... instead of painting huts & corners of nature it is better to write the VILLAGE & it will appear to everyone in great detail encompassing the entire village

-----*D E R E V N Y A*-----

POEMS TO THE SEA

*after Cy Twombly's suite of 24 drawings:
Poems to the Sea 1959, oil, graphite & wax
crayon on paper, each sheet approx. 33 x 31cm*

drawn-in map drawn blank

plenty of signs
riding

against
repetition

the repetitive on-shore breeze
to cross boundaries

marking
edges more
as borders that move

places merely to step through
these
changes seem too periodical
to hang on a wall

coming in last thing bringing
the roundness of hills &
trees

to write 'over the sea' then 'over the sea'
then 'over the sea' as poem nineteen
with its pale width-length-height

when everything is equal
in the flatness of water

2

moving
in blue ink

sightline into ghost-line
ghost-line into note-line
note-line into song-line
full of 3 / 4 time

crooning
splintered-lines

to concoct a story

to reconstruct a beach

keep in touch with

instances of colour turning:
pictorial / psychological stances
become a place to wait

repeated motifs imply spatial meaning
so linger & consider
& contemplate

speak to here & now

of material objects in space:
forms one by one
open up the page

allow each intricate detail
to blatantly intercept / contravene
all known fields

break lines or halve words

rule-them-in then rule-them-out
of spaces actual
as well as virtual:

the sea is steep & tilted
the sky is a deep gap
held by a broken mark

task:
 to record daily
 & fast
 white-grey-blue tessellated sea

10.05 / beach
 this café is a lightbox
 there to sit not with
 but in front of
 layers of dancing shapes
 that interlock

to get the immediate effect

hope to show
 that
 colour floats to catch
 the glow of water & light

4.25 / from the rocks
 pale pink
 jump-cuts to phthalo blue

7.10 / back home
 working at night

ocean-blown

beachcombing

by starlight

by moonlight
 whirlpools run

with acrobatic editing
 look

deliberately done

9.45 / on pages

soon creased-up
 images leap / balloon out

a torch replaces the moon

on the HORIZONTAL:

space sea waves beach shore wind cloud sky horizon *light*

on the VERTICAL:

space
sea
waves
beach
shore
wind
cloud
sky
horizon
light

seawards a display of distance
points extend then retreat:

previously
gathered
numbers suddenly close-up
en plein air
perfect as minutes
standing

fragments
as a sum of light

pencil-touch:
dot carry one then dot carry two
 then dot carry three
gets the spread
of ocean into it

sand
that empties that fills

confirms human scale
slight against mass
perceived as geological

date bottom left initials bottom right

sea								
day	sea							
grid	day	sea						
edge	grid	day	sea					
tide	edge	grid	day	sea				
light	tide	edge	grid	day	sea			
beach	light	tide	edge	grid	day	sea		
wind	beach	light	tide	edge	grid	day	sea	
storm	wind	beach	light	tide	edge	grid	day	sea

to keenly look
 watch
 scan
 spin
 squinting
 as if through 3D frames

to slowly lean
 immersed
 in space
 clouds / sea / horizon
 tilting
 strong light to push on with

geometry to
 assist observation
 & understanding
 to be in conversation
 or land on its own

standing outside with traces:

walking into this quest
with nothing less
than energy driving it

leaning towards an incomplete edge
on air

crayoned
numbers crossing-in
where
torn-through letters get to:

when
a poem crosses over

empirical proof gets erased

at this distance
 abbreviated bathers
 who call

make whispers

4 figures
 crossed-off
 leaving 8
 before spits of rain overtake

rows & rows numbered
 tallied

as if dishevelled disguises
 will hide everything
 passed left-to-right

as if
 every cancellation
 which is vertical
 gets overworked

with
 endless joined-up writing
 too
 pink

that hesitates

deviates
 to sepia shades

& carbon-copied blues in waiting

W H I T E C A P H O R I Z O N

12

9am

promise flows blue sky notes
upward path / narrow map / follow it down

sunlight is key

abrupt decision / incision
sea of sound

tracing framing
to render each thought & divide
adding up the means to multiply
although

towards
future / or

past
roaming subtraction is to zero

in crayon / gesso / pencil / pastel / biro

geometry assists / can test observation

to measure with:

a human hand as a hand an arm as an arm a body
 as a body
 as a field

different permutations will occur up & down in space
 but on the horizontal all is intuitive

entered exerted upon
 from every side

sky
 instantly onto the page

network of white wandering
 in a skein

cumulus half-erased

4pm
 caught between
 weather
 & some far-fetched book of maps
 whether to subtract beyond black
 or omit detail altogether

 fault of failing precision:

 a sudden jolt of storm clouds
 swaying west overhead
 this warm wind won't widen the sea's light
 won't widen
 its stripe of porcelain white

 every texture & form
 aiming at big effects
 ascends gets
 a silver thread
 for reflected lightning instead

 every aspect of scale
 gets offset or dwarfed by the horizon

same as writers
 revising their text

 2 seconds into it when to acknowledge
 2 red sail-boats as facts

float a crimson run it along
 the serrated edge

6pm
 caught unsteady
 by bands of distant greyness
 draw
 contours outlines
 or less
 steer graphite back & forth

SO	TO	I
KNOWING	ABSORB	HAVE
NOTHING	SUCH	A
ABOUT	RAW	FEELING
METHODS	SENSATION	THIS
OF	THEN	MIGHT
PAINTING	TREAT	JUST
THE	IT	BE
SEA	WITH	THE
I	THE	RIGHT
CAN	GREATEST	PLACE
BUT	RESPECT	AND
WAIT	FOR	TIME

this scattering
 gets rewritten
 as diagrams of air

even clean hands leave marks that are telling

arcs for numbers
 held as confetti
 or revised as petals
 thrown
 by diagonal weather

scale scope
 open & generous for
 on the shoreline:
 stones
 shells
 sea-weed &
 silver paper

on the page:
 these gestures settle into patterns

or disappear-as-red

walk away

write / draw more in the hours left

warm wet sea air
fresh salt air
&
gradual

white light

ROSE white light

PEARL white light

CREAM white light

COPPER white light

MAGENTA white light

that shines COBALT

mood & matter inhabits
over & over

each state's surviving trace speaks up

could say be careful

could be
careful
or could say cancel
& catalogue
what could
be careful or
could say cancel
or could be
careful &
catalogue
what
turns up

but

be

careful
simply with your hands
the unlikeliest shapes arrest

cancel & go beyond simply what
should cancel what will be differently heard

something signalling
something

something
disappearing to red

disappeared disappear-red

so close to broken ground

script in translation
quietly cursive

action of letters:
their crowdedness
their sound

in space where things shift
where
animations of light get pressed into
one breath of air
& the next
& the next

incongruous as letters torn out

impossible diagram
to write
draw

need to squeeze signs through it

words

to move

those erase about

grim E L the forming

rise IN EM version grids rain & tide create new surfaces each instant
 & CL ENTS to last HORIZON by its nature not known
 fall EMENT be arranged rumble as INCAN TA TION of
 to new weather colour IN FIN IT IES felt
 be deep & level as blurry sea water

21

each scrawl valid as if
glazed / fired
without the safety of blue
inscription

to finger tap & mime each new question
while still running
with a score

atmosphere recorded
then drawn wide as sea water

only perspective left
is of minutes

with post-epic perspective
 everything has to mesh at the level of myth

on this beach
 something
 rounded-up or rounded upon

zig zags
 in a diary
 becoming a maze
 becoming a field circled about
 or a field circled around

not just one angle to it:

a continuous sweep & tally
 concentrated in an absurd document

mapping the territory
 it goes right here:
 any teller will tread a fine line
 rounding the sun's sparkle

refining performance it suspends

refusing contrivance it scatters

shapes overlap as forms change
 both ways
 they contradict:

as diagrams encased in waves

as co-ordinates that interlace & hide

can this debris reflect
 psychic images washed up
 always decaying
 from the sea bed

accrued using
 blurred printer's blue

reversing green to obscure changes
 that do come landing

24 frames produced earlier
imply long-shots whatever our concepts do

like rebels who reframe questions / messages / quotations:

 fragments

 for the sea to carry
 over sand & stones looping

not only white & its relationship to light

that cancelled beach

that rampant slang

this perpendicular location

those dislodged number rows

their shuffle left-to-right

those wordless surfers

their abbreviated summersaults

this overtaking tide

these cross-listed players

these crisscrossing signs

in mid-gesture white underneath / white inside

POSTSCRIPT

Poems to the Sea in relation to *Painterly Poetics* – An Explication

I have used three American poets – Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Cole Swensen – as literary models to inform my own writing process. In recognizing creative practice as a network of conversations, my approach was to contextualize the construction of *Poems to the Sea* with the disciplines of critical reading and critical writing, specifically drawing upon the spirit of literary experiment that emerged at Black Mountain College in the early 1950s.

The development of my critical thesis reflects how my creative energy has been concentrated upon insights gained from American predecessors, for Black Mountain enabled and put into action Olson and Creeley's belief that poetry was capable of the ambition and sensibility of Abstract Expressionist painting. I identify with poets and painters associated with the college and its legacy, especially with their adoption of composition-by-field. I see them as companions in the creative process, producing work that reveals the inter-connectedness of artistic practice. Discovering equivalences between disciplines through close-reading of poems and paintings, I wanted to make my analysis of the actual process, in terms of a poet or painter's means of seeing and constructing, of primary importance. Consequently, the poems and paintings I have chosen to consider within the thesis act as sites of formation and process, while I discuss them as always in a state of 'becoming'. This understanding of openness that informs the symbiotic relations between poetry and painting was formalised not only in the teaching and creative activities that took place at Black Mountain, but also in Olson's significant essay 'Projective Verse' (1950).

Olson is an instinctive writer: the example he sets in both his essays and his poems is to use language as an action, as I have tried to do in *Poems to the Sea*. His guiding theories such as ‘Projective Verse’ utilise the intuitive gesture as a cohesive means of research. Similarly, within the spatial flow of every *Maximus* poem, the content is made to hold its own position. In keeping with Olson’s pursuit, the Abstract Expressionist’s aim was to make the application of paint the experiential source of each work. The structure of the opening chapter on Olson is designed to elucidate this connection between the verbal and the visual. I situate Olson’s sense of gestural rhythm in relation to Jackson Pollock; his use of gestural scale in relation to Robert Motherwell; his understanding of history in relation to Cy Twombly; his awareness of proprioception in relation to the dancer Merce Cunningham; and his consideration of painterly process in relation to Willem de Kooning and Joseph Fiore.

In researching and writing *Poems to the Sea* I became increasingly aware of how Olson’s theories rely on his innovative interplay of disciplines and his ability to draw upon different bodies of knowledge. In terms of his influence on the collection, I have remained fascinated by the speech currents of language that drive Olson’s poems, revealing the vitality of each gesture. I am especially struck by the immediacy of his words, phrases or lines when seen and experienced as physical things on the page. These attributes of Olson’s poetry bear comparison to the intense energy of a painting by Pollock, de Kooning or Twombly, the painterliness contained within the surface of a specific work, especially when one is able to scrutinize the original painting in a gallery. Olson’s effect on my writing was pivotal when developing poems that reveal the artist’s physical activity and connection to their materials, the involvement of the body in creating an artwork.

Insights gained from Olson's spontaneous open field poetics made me more aware of the role of the breath: how its instinctive expansiveness equates with the painter's largeness of expression. This was supported by a number of artist statements I collected while viewing various exhibitions, declarations that affiliate them closely to Olson, such as: 'active form is good ... formation is movement, act. Formation is life' (Klee); 'it is really a matter of ending this silence and solitude, of breathing and stretching one's arms again' (Rothko); and 'no limits, just edges' (Pollock). Olson's understanding of unrestricted gestural-bodily movement in any medium has been central to the writing of *Poems to the Sea*. Learning from his example and becoming more aware of the spatial and syntactical relations of the open-field, whereby images are answering to other images, has particularly influenced the form and development of the collection.

Olson and Creeley were engaged in a shared poetic project: both were concerned with the motion of the line propelled by the breath; one thought or observation shifting into another; the form of the poem discovering itself as it moved along. Contributing directly to Olson's development of 'Projective Verse' through their extensive correspondence, Creeley (like his mentor) absorbed and responded to the energies and abilities of several visual artists, instigating and participating in a series of collaborations. In Chapter Two I consider the way that Creeley understood and valued visual experience. My focus on his connection with Philip Guston, Frank Stella and Robert Indiana – their methods of seeing and making – reveals in each case an affinity between poet and painter while emphasizing the respect Creeley accorded these and other members of first and second generation post-war American artists, including a number of them in his 'company' of aesthetic fellow-travellers and

explorers. Through the juxtaposition of poems and paintings I have chosen for discussion, the chapter shows how Creeley endorses the experiential basis of composition-by-field: finding the means to project the speaker's dynamic attentive presence where, at all times, every object and image becomes an unfolding event in the poem.

Immersed in open field poetics while writing *Poems to the Sea*, I found myself constantly adopting Creeley's aim 'to give account' of the mutability that is characteristic of the creative process. In common with Olson and Creeley, as well as the painters I connected them with, I wanted to liberate these poems from any presiding descriptive intention. Creeley's surges of feeling that are often halted by awkward or uncertain instances of expression perfectly convey the inhibiting effect of moments of self-doubt, the incessant unrest that goes into the making of my own poems. In writing the collection, I wanted to use the properties of the medium to link the process of making a poem with that of making a painting: in *Poems to the Sea* I searched for utterances equivalent to painterly energies and gestures, while at the same time, tracking the speaker's paratactic leaps of thought. The subject is always in the act of making, involved in the act of reaching and struggling towards an elusive image. From Creeley I have learned that emotion is implicit to the effort, and this striving to construct a concrete image from something intangible informs the means of each poem's articulation.

Similarly aware of the possibilities of visual art, Swensen participates in the actualities of the creative process: building upon Olson's innovative use of the extended line, she provides an immediate response to vision. In the third and final

chapter I discuss how, as a contemporary ekphrastic poet, Swensen explores the manner in which her subject begins to really ‘see’ and then continues both ‘seeing’ and ‘not seeing’; and in the particular case of the painter Pierre Bonnard, how Swensen examines his methods of organizing a composition and his approach to constructing a view. By concerning herself with contrasting ways of ‘seeing’ and ways of ‘making’, she tests the capability of language to enact the painterly and the visual. In a Swensen poem, what is seen within the frame is directing the speaker’s train of thought but, as with Creeley, there is often an instability and uncertainty attached to the speaker’s perspective, for their position is never static. Intervals as leaps of perception or gaps left within the poetic line create a tension between what is audible and what is visible; these leaps or gaps produce a tautness between what is being seen and what is being said.

Swensen integrates passages of prose with sections of verse that nevertheless maintain an open, spatial and rhythmic quality, the text adopting the motion of her specific nature as she sets each run of words into the white space. In terms of enhancing the visual aspects of the poem, she devotes great attention to how different facets can be variously placed upon the page. Swensen’s productive mix of construction and intuition to achieve spatial exactness in her layout has been a considerable influence on my own writing. The shaping and positioning of letters, words, lines and stanzas according to their rhythm and sound play, while simultaneously assessing their visual emphasis and sense of weight, has been vital to establishing a distinctive aesthetic appearance to each of the three sections of *Poems to the Sea*. I wanted every page of the collection to provide a visual as well as a verbal experience for the reader.

As a medium of exploration, writing the collection in conjunction with the analytical prose of my thesis on the painterly poetics of Olson, Creeley and Swensen has effectively revealed many of the intricacies and dimensions of my creative practice. This confluence of creative and critical work has resulted in a deep attentiveness to process. In an autobiographical sense, *Poems to the Sea* documents what became a powerful impulse in the studio to construct a specific series of non-representational images: painterly-diagrammatic-textual impressions of coastal light marked by an ever-shifting atmosphere. Inspired by Twombly's series of the same title, I wanted to record sensations of light and air in a visual field where everything is moving.

With each image, I aimed to express vision and movement all at once and looking now at these palimpsests on the studio wall, I get the sense of being left with traces of action and sensation, fragments of feeling and thought. Changes of direction have been the catalyst of numerous transformations so that ideas submerged in the layering – which was sometimes transparent and other times opaque – have often re-emerged later on in the series. In Olson's terms, every one of these foundational and residual images could be read as 'a complex of occasions'.

The poetry of Olson, Creeley and Swensen addresses the kinetics of experience: through the resonances of their words, each poet demonstrates a concern for the association of objects in the open field of the poem, and the intense way these objects then inter-operate with one another on the page; each reveals how the exterior world becomes accessible to the writer in split seconds of consciousness. As in the case of the painters they admire whom connected directly with the properties of their chosen media, all three poets have treated language as an art material. Spatial orientation is

also a significant consideration: at various points in my reading of their verse, Olson, Creeley and Swensen have all facilitated in my writing process an acceptance of a momentary loss of bearings where disorientation occurs before the subject gains recognition and locates the self in space. Olson, Creeley and Swensen also convey an appreciation of geometry that can be simultaneously conceptual and concrete, a projective way of seeing the world only presently coming into view. This bringing together of what is intimate and what is situated far away, putting them equally against the arm's length reach of the artist in the studio was crucial in the development of *Poems to the Sea*.

Acts of measuring and numbering involved in making a composition occur in several of my poems and often these are juxtaposed with the roaming consciousness of the speaker who, if they are to make progress, must avoid being distracted from the geometrical drawing, most usually a grid of some kind, that is their task under hand. The parallel poetics between visual artists and Olson, Creeley and Swensen that I emphasize throughout the thesis are intrinsic to the content of my poems. The painter's focus on horizontals and verticals and how they might intersect chimes with the concerns of the poet; for both have to work with the effects of lengthening and shortening lines as the emergence of an all-over rhythm demands.

From studying Olson's, Creeley's and Swensen's poetry, I have recognized that the drama of recurrence and variation critically depends upon individual line breaks. As with a painting, the poem is built of units and forces: the concentrations of energy contained within the intervals, as well as inside the actual lines. The process that drives the subjects in several of my poems is typified by Mondrian who simplified his

diagrammatic rendering of place (in the series *Pier and Ocean*, for example) into a partial grid-like structure, full of the kind of gaps and ghost-lines that Swensen refers to as either extending or abbreviating our way of looking at the world.

The writing of *Poems to the Sea* has been informed by Swensen's ability to merge physical and ethereal realities, for her poetry is carefully packed with a wealth of both erudite and sensory detail. While historical and scientific knowledge is included in her poetic treatment of reflections, for instance, intangible factors are dealt with as they emerge into the field of view: she asks us to consider all of the uncertainties, instabilities and distortions experienced when staring either into bright sunlight or ambient lamplight; she asks what the acts of looking 'at' water or 'through' glass lead us to see or think; she reveals the constant happening of familiar images recalled in things seen for the first time.

This conversation between the verbal and the visual, epitomized by Olson, Creeley and Swensen, shaped the form and content of my collection of poems, enabling my investigation of the affinities shared between poetry and visual art. Throughout this body of work, the process of writing is seen as congruent with the process of painting. I distinguish various modes of expression in my own creative practice that encompasses both disciplines. Olson's open field model that has influenced Creeley and Swensen continues to be an inspiration for me: its potential as immense as the limitless space of the open sea.